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A PIONEER EMANCIPATOR.

RICHMOND, KY.:
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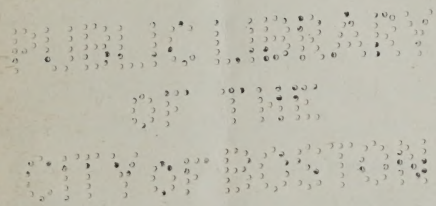

RICHMOND, KY.:
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July 8, 1899.

A PIONEER EMANCIPATOR.

[From the Nashville (Tennessee) American.]

On leaving for Beersheba for the summer, where he will prosecute the work of arranging and working up the valuable material he has collected, Col. W. G. Terrell left at the American office an interesting relic of the great slavery struggle, which may be fitly called the first gun of the war. It is a small piece of brass artillery which was loaned by Col. Terrell to Maj. J. E. Saunders, of this county, for exhibition at the Centennial exhibit. The history of the piece involves the history of a leading actor in the great drama, in which the sections was inflamed to strife. It was in 1845 that Cassius M. Clay was engaged in the publication of the True American at Lexington, Ky., when a brief editorial article—'not written by Mr. Clay'—appeared in the paper, and gave deep offense to the people of Lexington, being regarded as incendiary in character. A large meeting of its best citizens was held, and it was resolved that Mr. Clay's paper could not be longer published in that city. To meet that threat, Mr. Clay had cast in Cincinnati by the celebrated bell maker, G. W. Coffin, two pieces of fine artillery of the

very best metal, in the composition of which was about two hundred dollars worth of silver. These he mounted in his office, bearing on the entrance to a pair of double doors, which had been arranged with a chain so as to open only a certain width. Besides this he had enlisted a dozen bold men. The rest of his arrangements were characteristic of that desperate courage Mr. Clay has always displayed. He prepared for the escape of his force when the office should become no longer tenable and placed a keg of powder so that he could easily touch it off, intending, as soon as his force had escaped and the room had been filled by the mob, to blow up the office, his enemies, and himself to perish, like Sampson in the ruins. No man has ever doubted that he would have carried out his programme; but fortunately the excitement of the preparation and the waiting for the attack brought on brain fever and the office was peacefully removed, while he was unconscious, to Cincinnati, where the publication was resumed after his recovery.

The two beautiful pieces of artillery remained in his possession until a few years ago, when one of them was presented by him to his friend, Col. W. G. Terrell.

Mr. Clay's life in Kentucky has been one of singular adventure and interest. No knight of the period of chivalry ever maintained his honor with more determined courage than he his opinions. He was rich, a man of fine appearance and noble presence, quiet, unassuming and courteous in his bearing, and only the terrible when aroused. Born in 1810, he imbibed the Henry Clay idea of emancipation while at college at Yale, and signalled his devotion to the opinions by emancipating about forty slaves. He was never an abolitionist, and simply maintained the Henry Clay idea of the inexpediency and folly of slavery on account of its effect on the white man and the institution of the model republic. He pursued his own way without ever entangling himself with the fanatics of the East. At the breaking out of the Mexican war, greatly to the surprise of his friends he raised a company and joined the First Kentucky Cavalry, and was captured at Incarnacion—a capture which was one of the events of the war, in which he refused to kneel before his captors at the risk of his life. In 1850 he was a candidate for the State Constitutional Convention and became involved in a personal difficulty with Hon. C. W. Turner, whose father was his opponent. In the alterca-

tion Mr. Turner was killed and Mr. Clay desperately wounded. He had previously had a difficulty with Maj. Sam. F. Brown, of Fayette county, whom he literally cut to pieces with a bowie knife. This also grew out of politics. He was a candidate for Governor of Kentucky, making his canvasses armed to the teeth and at the peril of his life, but was never seriously molested. He was made Major General of volunteers in 1862, but went again to Russia as Minister, where he remained until 1869.

One of his duels was with Bob Wickliffe, a son of Gov. Wickliffe. Albert Sidney Johnston was a second in the affair.

Such is a brief sketch of a man who was a leading actor in a great drama. In the greatest part of the drama, the preparation of the train, which led to the denouement, the conflict of opinions, he was a chief actor, and, as Minister to Russia, when we consider the great part Russia played in our struggle, he did more, perhaps, than any General in the field in the war itself. Since his return from Russia he has resided on his paternal acres in Madison county, Ky., a bold, outspoken Democrat, and it is a singular fact that he was compelled a few years since to kill one of the race he helped to emancipate, in

defense of his own life. He is now a hale, fine looking man of seventy, respected by all those who once held his opinions in detestation; genial, kind, the very soul of courtesy, disposed only to regard the far future moral effect of the policy he advocated to a successful issue, and indulging in no sentimental nonesense about the race which happened to be the object of his care. He labors and votes for Democratic ideas of government, and indulges in no regrets over the splendid career he held in his hands and threw away to pursue his convictions.

In the hands of a Macauley or a Scott, his life would be a romance, without plot or need for embellishment. In the American Encyclopedia, of Appleton, he is set down as a relative of Henry Clay, which is about as near as the American Cyclopedia ever gets to anything. He was an admirer of, and acknowledges Henry Clay as his teacher, but they were not nearly related. It is the singular fate of such men to be obscured in their own time by the Grants and Shermans who burn powder and make a noise, but Mr. Clay was the more potent actor where Grant and Sherman would have been babies. Such men as Mr. Clay stand out in their own full stature in after times for succeed-

ing generations, when epauletted nobodies are only remembered as movers of men as pieces on a board. He could throw away honors for conviction sake, and struggle like a giant against terrible odds, and when the moral and intellectual conflict was over and the strife of arms ended, he could again take the minority side, and labor for the Democratic theories of government, which slavery alone prevented his advocating before, and that when the Grants and Shermans were abandoning their own convictions, that rewards might follow with the strong side. The interesting relic which has furnished the occasion for this article may be seen at the American office on Bank Alley. We have been glad of the occasion to speak thus of a man whose devotion to principles dwarfs all the pigmy rewards won by men who could more easily bend towards narrow self interest. The time is now at hand when those who have held the minority opinions are about to be honored in themselves or in their memories, and the pigmy epauletted are shrinking into microscopic littleness in the back-ground.